Advancing **Equality.**
Promoting **Justice.**
Building **Community.**

COLCHESTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Branch Out to Learn & Grow

"We create innovative thinkers for a dynamic world"

The National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) would like to submit a proposal to work with the Colchester Board of Education in auditing their racial justice and equity work and preparing recommendations for how to create a more just, equitable, and inclusive committee and broader community. NCCJ is a demonstrated expert in the field of racial justice and has helped clients develop and implement plans for transformation in the area of racial equity. We have worked with large corporations, governmental and non-profit organizations, schools, colleges, and universities. We work closely with clients to identify their needs and unique cultural challenges, to educate their workforce and community departments and agencies to help develop a skill set for interrupting injustice where they see it, and to develop and implement a comprehensive plan for making their organizational structure more inclusive and their organizational practice more equitable.

NCCJ History

NCCJ was established in 1927 as the National Conference of Christians and Jews with the stated purpose of combating anti-Catholic hatred and encouraging interfaith dialogue in the United States. Since then, we have expanded our scope to include several other areas of social justice and changed the organization's name to The National Conference of Community and Justice. Our anti-racist work and education remains a critical part of our mission and practice.

Race is one of the most significant organizing principles of American society and has been since prior to the country's inception. NCCJ understands race as a social construct with an undeniable impact on our real world interactions and lived experiences, and we understand that racism manifests itself in every aspect of our society. NCCJ views racism through a sociological lens, which explains racism as "a highly organized system of "race" based group privilege which operates on every level of society and is held together by a sophisticated ideology of color/race supremacy" (Cazenave and Maddern 1999). This definition allows for a systemic understanding of racism as a deeply rooted societal problem, which is central to the workings of the United States. Because racism operates at every level of society and is critical to the way our country functions we can understand that it is therefore embedded in all of our social institutions such as government, education, and our recreation spaces and activities. It is so important a part of our social fabric that we don't even realize all of the many ways it is woven into everything that we do.

In order to root out racism we have to be willing to confront it head on and realize that it is not just a problem for those who are oppressed, but it is also a significant problem for those who are oppressors. An effective anti-racist curriculum and practice will include two features. First, the voices of the oppressed must be heeded above all. This means that educators and practitioners must engage with material from people of color who have experienced first-hand the physical and psychological violence that is inherent in a racist social structure. Their stories reveal the real work that must be done to dismantle racism and white supremacy. Far from focusing on only People of Color, the impact of racism on both dominate and subordinate groups means that an effective anti-racist curriculum and practice will also include a frank analysis of whiteness as a social construct with negative implications for people of all races. Second, because racism is systemic we can and must approach it from an intersectional perspective which understands that racism cannot be isolated from other systems of oppression but must be examined in conjunction with such issues as sex, gender, class, disability, sexuality, and body weight as any of these identities will have an impact on how racism is experienced and how one's race is wielded against them as a weapon by the larger society. An intersectional lens does not dilute the study or significance of racism; it instead highlights how the experience of racism is qualitatively different for people who

must also navigate other systems of oppression. A black woman will have very different challenges than a black man. The systemic nature of racism also means that we will not spend time diagnosing blackness as a pathology which causes black people to be less than in society, but instead we will focus on how our country's obsession with whiteness as the default of humanity has created centuries of disadvantage whose cumulative impact on African Americans and other groups of People of Color cannot be underestimated.

Proposed Methods, Strategies, and Actions

NCCJ is fully committed to deploy our resources to ensuring that this project is completed within the timeline set forth by the Colchester Board of Education before the end of the fiscal year, June 2021. We will utilize our full-time staff and contracted consultants to support Colchester BOE along the path to racial equity.

Data Gathering

NCCJ would use mixed methods to guide the Colchester BOE to its goal of greater racial inclusivity. The first step would be data gathering from the Board, its member organizations, and the population it serves. The internal assessment would include an audit of existing practices, policies, and structure within Colchester BOE. Organizational culture is set from the top down. As the Board is aware, it is not enough to want to be inclusive, leadership must take active steps to make sure that they are representative of the population that they are serving so that the voices of that population are a part of their decision making. Committee members would be asked to take part in a needs assessment in order to discover where they believe the challenges in addressing racial equity lie. We would also review leadership structure and what steps your organization is currently taking to address any existing gaps of knowledge, representation, or structure within the leadership team. We would gather the information for both components of the assessment using focus groups and a custom-designed survey to review the existing culture within the Board of Education, the School District and Colchester Community.

Education

NCCJ would then use established practices through our anti-racism workshop to establish trust, communication, and shared language and history around racism and anti-racist work. This would allow us to guide the board in their anti-racist initiatives. NCCJ excels at creating community and an environment where participants feel safe, supported, and seen, allowing for a level of trust and vulnerability most people never expect to achieve with their co-workers. Trust, vulnerability, and respect are the cornerstones of social justice work, and must be present in order to develop an effective anti-racist practice. This will also be an opportunity to begin the work of skill building which provides participants with the confidence and abilities to facilitate anti-racist dialogue, interactions, and practices within their daily lives.

NCCJ follows a theory of praxis developed by the University of Massachusetts Amherst's Social Justice Education program. This model is particularly useful for adult learners, who are often challenged by more traditional methods of teaching which may not reflect the way that adults learn. In this model it has been found that traditional methods of learning, where there is a teacher who holds and imparts knowledge while students are passive listeners, often fall short in their pedagogical goals and are therefore not as effective in creating change. Learning is more impactful, especially for adults, when students have an active role in shaping the classroom environment and are guided along a learning journey, which requires their full and active participation. The process is collaborative, with educators and students working together towards enlightenment and action. Using this framework, our workshops consist of four components:

1. Content, which provides historical context, grounds us in theory, and gives participants a mutual understanding of how systems of oppression function.

2. Experience, which allows participants the opportunity to engage with one another and find common ground in their experiences of understanding and navigating oppression.
3. Skill building, where participants have an opportunity to learn and practice skills useful for interrupting their own biases as well as injustices they may encounter from others.
4. Application, where participants begin to think through concrete actions they can take in their lives to help develop more inclusive environments.

Because of the nature of our workshops we prefer to conduct them with smaller groups where people feel more comfortable taking risks in their learning, and thus are able to have more meaningful experiences. We understand that people are at different places in their learning on these sensitive issues, so we never blame or shame people for where they are in the spectrum of learning. We don't hold individuals accountable for creating the oppressive systems we have to navigate, but we do hold them accountable for change. We are also aware that this work will be difficult for the participants, many of whom are unaware of the extent to which others are suffering. We therefore strive to create an environment that is safe and supportive for everyone in the space.

Social justice education is challenging work, and often awakens powerful emotions within participants. In the social justice learning space our boundaries of learning are pushed. Things that we grew up understanding as "common sense" are often revealed to be not so sensible. This can create a sense of discomfort for participants who are not used to thinking critically about the social world. At NCCJ we hold that discomfort is an important part of the learning process. We stick with discomfort because discomfort is where the growth happens. It is only when we are uncomfortable that we are truly motivated to begin to make changes towards a better world.

Finally, we believe that a co-facilitation model is best because having more than one facilitator in the room creates a richer learning experience. The co-facilitation model allows us to better reach different learners who may receive people differently and to bring multiple perspectives into the space. We also believe that this work is most effective when the facilitators hold diverse identities; one person from the marginalized group and one from the dominant group. When we conduct training on racism, we will always have one white facilitator and one facilitator of color in the room. We are all impacted by systems of oppression, but members of dominant identity groups are often unaware of the negative impacts these systems have on their lives. Having multiple identity groups represented allows us to more strongly demonstrate this reality and fosters cross collaboration and inter-group dialogue. Further, there are times when the dynamics of the room demand a person from the dominant identity group's presence in support of the similarly identified participants' development and learning. Perhaps even more importantly, having a person in the room from the dominant identity group sends an important message that the onus of dismantling systems of oppression is not simply the work of the marginalized group, but a burden for us all to share.

Written Report

A final written report incorporating the critical review of the strategic plan, the output from the trainings and focus groups, and the recommendations of NCCJ would be delivered within a timely fashion upon completion of the project. This is consistent with what NCCJ has done for other clients looking to transform their organizations from a racial equity perspective.

Follow Up Assessment

The follow-up assessment should involve a review of changes implemented since the initial project, a comparison to the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Accessibility and Just goals, and solicitation of individual perspectives on what impact the changes have had on the way they experience the Colchester Board of Education and the broader community.

Qualifications and Bios of Key Personnel

Cynthia L. Martin, NCCJ President & CEO

Cynthia Martin has been a Social Justice educator and advocate for nearly 30 years, it is her work and her passion. She ran her own consulting business in New York City for 13 years specializing in diversity and inclusion. Cynthia was the Director of Programs for the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ) for 5 years and became the President & CEO in 2017. Cynthia graduated Summa Cum Laude from Hunter College of the City University of New York with a Bachelor of Science degree in Public Health Education.

Nyaunu Stevens, NCCJ Director of Programs

Nyaunu Stevens is the Director of Programs for the National Conference for Community and Justice. She is a passionate advocate for social justice and brings with her 21 years of experience as an educator and 15 years of experience in the world of social justice advocacy. Trained as an actress and an academic, Nyaunu is a powerful presenter and facilitator. She has worked with people of all ages, from preschool to adult, and with people from all socioeconomic backgrounds. She has served as a Lead Teaching Artist with Cleveland Public Theater where she worked to bring theater education to disadvantaged youth on their own territory. She spent years at The Cleveland Play House as an instructor and in collaboration with Project Act's The Reading Company staging children's books for homeless children in an effort to foster their literacy skills. She has also worked as an adjunct faculty member at the University of Connecticut and Quinebaug Valley Community College where she taught in the fields of Sociology and Women's Studies. She holds a Master's in Sociology from the University of Connecticut and a Bachelor of Arts in Sociology with a minor in Theater from Cleveland State University where she was graduated summa cum laude. She is a subject matter expert in Sociology of the Body, Fat Studies, and Race, Class, and Gender.

Examples of Previous Work

NCCJ has a long history of working with clients towards systems change within their organizations and communities. I would like to highlight here two examples of long-term anti-racism work we have completed over the last few years.

In 2017 NCCJ was hired by the Mazzoni Center in Philadelphia, PA to address longstanding issues of systemic racism within the organization. Mazzoni leadership had been aware of the issues for quite some time and had tried to address them using minimal trainings. These trainings were ineffective because they were not comprehensive and ongoing and resulted in no organizational change. Additionally, senior management had avoided attending the trainings because they did not recognize the importance of them and the trainings were not mandated. NCCJ recommended to Mazzoni that in order to work towards change in the organizational policies and procedures, the trainings should be mandatory for all employees at every level, and this suggestion was well received.

NCCJ conducted four, two-day anti-racism trainings to accommodate all Mazzoni employees. The trainings included brainstorms on the challenges Mazzoni faced around oppression, especially as they related to racism. The output from these brainstorms was typed and organized and included in the final report, which was given to every employee and the Board of Directors. This strategy was successful in creating change within Mazzoni and in building a culture of inclusivity because all employees had a chance to say what didn't work for them in the way that Mazzoni was being functioning. There was no hiding – everything was documented and put into the report and everyone felt that their voices mattered. NCCJ's recommendations were implemented and

resulted in policy and staffing changes that fostered an environment of acceptance and inclusion for even the most marginalized voices at the Mazzoni Center.

During 2019 we partnered with the City of Middletown, CT on a comprehensive, long-ranging anti-racism initiative to begin the work of developing a racial equity strategic plan. This project was sparked by the events in Charlottesville, Virginia in 2017 when activists worked to have Confederate statues removed and were met with a violent response from white nationalists. In the wake of this the City of Middletown realized that there was a need for change within their own community, and NCCJ was chosen from several applicants to support them in their efforts. Over the course of the year NCCJ delivered two two-day anti-racism trainings to town leadership, four focus groups to solicit the perspectives of residents of color, and two community conversations to assess the action steps that residents of color would like to see take place to address long-standing racist policies and cultures in Middletown. The project also included an extensive report discussing the findings of the three components of the initiative and situating the qualitative findings within the context of quantitative data on demographics and outcomes for various racial groups in Middletown. The project was a success, and NCCJ was lauded by the city leadership and residents alike for our facilitation of the various components of the project and for delivering a final report that was comprehensive, detailed, and specific to the needs of Middletown. City leadership has indicated that they would like to move forward with developing and implementing the anti-racist strategic plan with the support of NCCJ. (*The final page of this proposal outlines the scope of work with Middletown and provides a link to the full report).*

References

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Full report: https://www.middletownct.gov/DocumentCenter/View/18262/NCCJ-Middletown-Report-on-Anti-Racism-Initiative-in-the-City-of-Middletown-PDF?bidId
** Please see the final page of this document for a brief outline of the work completed.*

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Covid-19 Alternatives

The way we do work has fundamentally changed over the last two months in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic. NCCJ is a human relations organization, and as such, we believe in the value of delivering programs in person as a means of establishing safe, intimate, vulnerable spaces and building community. In the interest of public health, this is not currently possible. However, we are fully prepared to execute the trainings and focus groups remotely should in-person activities still not be a possibility.

We have transitioned to delivering our programs online until it is once again safe to congregate in groups. In this way, we are still able to create the space necessary for participants to be willing to let down their guard and go on a journey of change. We deliver our online programs through Zoom and use a combination of features including the whiteboard and breakout rooms to create space for participants to actively engage in brainstorming and other activities. We are intentional in building in breaks and time away from the computer to combat Zoom fatigue while still covering all of our curriculum and sending participants away with a new skill set for interrupting racism both in interpersonal interactions and on a structural and systemic level.

Over the past 11 months, we have consistently delivered our programs virtually. Our online programs have been successful and we continue to learn and invent new ways of being effective facilitators remotely. We are

flexible and open to using new platforms and modifying our practices to better interact with workshop participants.

Of course, all policy and procedure reviews conducted as part of the assessment are already best conducted remotely to keep project costs low.

NCCJ: PROGRAMS AND FEE FOR SERVICE

Based on the request for an outline of our services, we understand that Colchester Board of Education is interested in assessment and training as it relates to race, gender, equity and inclusion. Below are topics and descriptions of our Education, Assessment and Consulting Services to assist with a broader picture of the way that NCCJ partners with committees and communities. Pricing is listed and NCCJ can customize a scope of work to fit any budget.

1. **NCCJ Anti-Racism Program**: 2 full days, delivered virtually (on-site option if restrictions are lifted) for a maximum of 30 participants. Ideal for all levels within an organization. We support a top down approach beginning with Leadership, Directors, Boards and Managers. Investment: $4,500 (mileage expensed if applicable). For smaller teams, less than 30, we also offer this program monthly for leaders at a rate of $300 per ticket per person for the two-day program.

NCCJ ANTI-RACISM PROGRAM

Since 1927, anti-racism work has been a part of NCCJ's mission and continues to be a central part of our work today. Our two-day NCCJ Anti-Racism Program has many components which we scaffold so that participants can have an understanding of how deeply ingrained racism is into our culture and of how we can all work together to dismantle it. In this program we cover the following:

- How we are all socialized around race
- The history of racism
- Terms and definitions
- How racism impacts everyone, generation after generation
- Microaggressions
- How to talk effectively and compassionately about racism
- Real life skills to interrupt all forms of bias and discrimination
- Ways to take action and build equity in your workplace and community

DEI CONSULTING
DIVERSITY EQUITY INCLUSION

2. **NCCJ DEI Consulting** No matter how well your organization responds to this moment, the world, especially your staff will be watching for proactive action and real progress. NCCJ DEI Consulting works with your entire organization to define, strategically plan and reshape the existing culture to one that

represents a feeling of belonging, diverse perspectives and an equitable future of work. Equity is a process not a product, therefore ongoing support and collaboration is key to sustainable change. Investment: $350 hour (a retainer option is available with a lower hourly rate).

3. **NCCJ Diversity Equity and Inclusion Assessment**

Focus Group(s) and BIPOC Focus Group(s) offer an opportunity to gather valuable information on the issues and challenges facing diverse talent, a sense of belonging and equity standards across an organization. Insights gathered from a representative sample of staff can inform DEI priorities, ensuring that investment in DEI targets the organization's most critical issues. Starting at $1,000 up to 2 hours for groups of 8-10 individuals.

NCCJ Diversity Equity and Inclusion Survey(s) Surveys provide the perfect tool for measuring the feelings and opinions of your workforce at scale. When used correctly, they can raise red flags about potential problems within your organization that you didn't know about (and would never have thought to check for), and they can uncover opportunities to empower employees through internal programs. Simply put, our assessment tools allow for feedback on the overall culture of your organization and provides individual perspectives to build into the company-wide initiative on diversity, equity and inclusion efforts. Investment starts at $1,000 depending on size and scope of the project.

NCCJ Community Conversations This NCCJ facilitated forum allows community members, neighbors and key leadership across all town and city departments to come together for sharing and listening sessions with the goal of improving ways to support the city's capacity and action towards broad structural change, via a racial equity plan, to address the root causes of institutional and structural racism in the community and will include collaboration with community members and other local stakeholders. Investment starts at $1,000 depending on size and scope of the project.

4. **Ongoing Education - NCCJ Workshops:** Partial Program List Segments NCCJ has the opportunity to customize programs to meet organizations interests and needs. The following is a sample of commonly requested topics:

Session - Foundational work
Purpose: To develop a shared understanding of definitions of terms. To explore the ways in which we have all been socialized into our beliefs. To have participants identify the ways in which they have been socialized. To explore the ways socialization plays out and carriers over to our personal lives. Activities include:

- Cycle of Oppression
- Cycle of Socialization
- Socialization Activity - Parallel Lines

Session – Where We Came From To Where We Are (Racism)
Purpose: To understand the history, current state and impact of racism in the United States. To explore how racism impacts our lives, personally and institutionally. Participants will share personal stories around race. This sharing is impactful for both people of color and white people. To explore how one's story of race may be both different and/or similar to others.

Session – White Privilege – Does Being White Make a Difference? (Racism)
Purpose: To provide an opportunity for participants to explore their White Identity and to unpack the unearned privilege this identity is given in the United States. To explore where and how White privilege manifests in our society so as to have a clearer understanding of how and why racism exists.

Session – Microaggressions and Skill Building (incorporates all issues)
Purpose: To explore how oppression plays out on a daily basis in schools, workplaces and communities and ways one might play into biases. This workshop will develop and give a chance to practice skills on how to interrupt bias when heard or seen.

Session – Courageous Conversations
Purpose: To provide practice in responding to those challenging conversations that may arise in the workplace. To practice interrupting bias and micro-aggressions and offer new techniques.

***Session – Do you know Current Language Around Gender? (Genderism)**
Purpose: This is an opportunity to explore and unpack gender: societies' gender roles and expectations. To explore transgender issues and the challenges that we, as a society have, to be inclusive and accommodating to this population.

***Session – Hail to Equality or Does Sexism Still Exist?**
Purpose: To explore the issues of cultural and institutional sexism and its effects in our society. To examine the inequality and inequity between men and women in the U.S.

***Session – Do you know Current Language Around Sexual Orientation (LGBQPA)?**
(Heterosexism/Homophobia)
Purpose: To explore current language on sexual orientations: lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, pansexual and asexual identities. To identify ways one can be supportive. To explore the issue of heterosexism/ homophobia, "coming out" and how one might be more inclusive.

Session – How do we Talk about Class? (Classism)
Purpose: To explore the issue of class in the United States. To examine the difference between wealth and income. To discuss the issue of increasing one's "capital" and how to move beyond one's immediate circle.

Session – How does Christian Privilege Affect Us and Our Surroundings? (Religionism)
Purpose: To explore the religious history of the U.S. and how our society has advantaged one group of religious and spiritual beliefs over all others. To have participants explore Islamophobia and anti-Semitism in the U.S.

Session – Let's Give Some Attention to Ableism!
Purpose: To examine the many aspects of ableism: developmental, emotional, physical or psychiatric. To review the medical and social models and ableist language.

Session – Ageism and Adultism - it Affects ALL of Us Regardless of your Age
Purpose: To examine stereotypes and discrimination against elders and youth in our society. To examine the ways we are socialized to interact with either end of the spectrum of age. To explore ways we can interact with youth and elders that value each group.

Session – Sizeism: The "F" word: Weight Bias and How Society Makes Us Feel Badly About Our Bodies
Purpose: This workshop explores fatphobia and how the multi-billion-dollar weight loss industry teaches us to feel badly about our own bodies and to treat others badly based on their body size. This workshop teaches you to recognize how weight bias shows up in your personal and professional life.

**Genderism, sexism and heterosexism work very well together, though there is crossover we recommend keeping all three sessions separate. Each can easily fill 2 to 2½ hour workshops.

Rates: Monthly, 2 ½ hour session – please choose one session from above. $1,000 (virtually or on-site)
For a Half-Day session (up to 4 hours) – please choose two to three sessions from above. $1,500
For a Full Day session (up to 8 hours) – please choose three to five sessions from above. $2,500
Pricing is for minimum of 15 participants and maximum of 35.

Joanne, thank you for the opportunity to explore how NCCJ can support Colchester Board of Education and the Colchester Community. We respect your decision to seek support in this area and we share the belief that today's communities must align from all points of service to create a plan to support diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility. Together, Colchester Board of Education and NCCJ can partner to collaborate to meet your needs and align with your strategic initiatives. Please don't hesitate to be in touch with any questions and let me know how we can support your diversity and inclusion efforts. I look forward to discussing this more and I hope to hear from you soon.

Warmest regards,

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Example of scope of work with Middletown:

Full report: https://www.middletownct.gov/DocumentCenter/View/18262/NCCJ-Middletown-Report-on-Anti-Racism-Initiative-in-the-City-of-Middletown-PDF?bidId=

City of Middletown | Professional Service Quotation, Estimate and/or Proposal Form 2018-2019 |

Project Component	**Deliverables**
A. Develop Project Plan	Comprehensive Project Plan - informed by HRC charges and community and youth stakeholders - including goals and deliverables for: 1. public outreach and education 2. data collection 3. action plan (report)
B. Deliver Public Outreach & Education Plan	Public outreach and education to include: 1. initial meeting with City of Middletown HRC stakeholders 2. three community discussions with identified community groups (@15-40 participants) 3. two focus groups with identified representatives from community groups, stakeholders, leadership (@10-20 participants) 4. two formal trainings (2-Day Anti-Racism & Action Planning Workshop) for the community, informed by community discussions and focus groups including youth input on subject matter (content) and processes (15-25 participants/workshop)
C. Data Plan	Data 1. information gathering and collection 2. raw data retention and processing 3. analysis and interpretation for reporting
D. Reports	Executive Summary - Progress Report Presentation Special Report – Action Plan Presentation